(c) No.

(d) Does not arise.

Indo-US Technology Cooperation

1787. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether an Indo-US technology cooperation deal, including high-tech space launch equipment, civilian nuclear energy and missile defence equipment and technology, has been under negotiations;

(b) if so, the agreement or Memorandum of Understanding, if any, has been signed; and

(c) what action has been and is being taken in the light thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) India and the United States are engaged in an ongoing dialogue on expanding bilateral cooperation in a number of areas in pursuit of the vision articulated by the Prime Minister and President Bush to qualitatively transform the India-U.S. relations. These areas include civilian space, civilian nucleare energy, high tecnology and missile defecne. Besides having discussions at the political level, the two sides have also established a bilateral High Technology Coopeation Group that held its second meeting in New Delhi on November 20, 2003. This is the first such group that the United States has set up with any country. Although no Memorandum of Understanding has been signed so far, these discussions have led to a considerable progress in deepening mutual understanding on these issues.

American help to India to fight against insurgency

1788. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether United States has offered material assistance to India to fight insurgency in difficult terrain in Kashmir and North-Eastern Region; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) No. However, India and the United States have institutionalised a Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism that provides a forum for an ongoing bilateral dialogue on cooperation in the area of counter-terrorism. As part of this dialogue, the two countries are engaged in capacity building in preventive and protective consequence management aspects of counter-terrorism, as also in intelligence sharing, law-enforcement cooperation and strengthening of international efforts in combating terrorism. The United States has also condemned, on a number of occasions, incidents of terrorism in different parts of the country.

Wheat import from India

1789. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Iraq has resumed import of wheat from India;

(b) if so, the details thereof with contracts entered into for the next three years;

(c) whether Government have explored the possibility of bartering export of wheat with import of crude oil from Iraq; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) No, Sir. So far, Government of India has received no specific request for supply of wheat from India. However, earlier contracts of supply of wheat from India under Oil for Food Programme are being renegotiated.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) No, Sir, The political situation in Iraq is still evolving and formation of an internationally recognized government by Iraqi people is awaited.